to the power utilities which include, *inter alia* conducting of energy audit for identifying the system elements responsible for excessive losses, installing capacitors to improve the voltage profile, preparation of system improvement schemes for strengthening and improvement of their transmission and distribution systems, installing tamper proof meter boxes to check theft of energy and setting up vigilance squads to detect cases of theft of energy. From August, 1986, theft of energy has been made a cognizable offence under Section 39 of Indian Electricity Act, 1910. An incentive scheme has also been introduced by the Government of India to motivate the State Electricity Boards for bringing about reduction in Transmission and Distribution losses.

The Bihar State Electricity Board have reported that their latest tariff has been framed so as to penalise the consumers in case of low power factor of their load. In addition, consumer with reactive loads have been requested to install capacitors in their installation so as to reduce the T&D losses. To stop theft of power, an Anti Power Theft Cell has been created to BSEB which is conducting regular raids. A large number of cases have been detected and FIRs lodged.

Inconclusive Testing of Well Ichapur-I

2178. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answe'r to Unstarred Question 96, given in the Rajya Sahba on the 21st November, 1996 and state:

(a) the reasons identified for intermittent flow of liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons from the well Ichapur-I;

(b) whether reviewing the drilled data, two conclusions were drawn namely, cither a new vertical substitute well should be drilled from the existing well Ichapur-I or side track from the existing well Ichapur-I at a suitable depth; and

(c) if so, the reasons for ignoring the above recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The reasons for intermittent flow of oil and gas was the poor reservior characteristics and presence of little quantity of hydrocarbons.

(b) and (c) This is as per the normal practice wherein drilled data from exploratory well is subject to critical review including outside experts.

The status of exploration in Bengal Basin including results of Ichapur-I is being reviewed to firm up an appropriate action plan.

Refusal of CIL and the Railways to supply coal to Badarpur TPS

2179. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 140 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st Novermber, 1996 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that both the Coal India Limited and the Railways have refused to supply coal to Badarpur Thermal Power Station till their dues are cleared by the Thermal Power Station and if so, the details of the outstanding dues of Coal India Limited and the Railways, as on the 30th November, 1996; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to clear these dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) Coal India has adopted cash and carry scheme for supply of coal. Railways have also introduced pre-payment scheme for coal transportation from 1.10.1996. However, due to BTPS's poor financial position due to short payment by DESU, the Railways are transporting coal to BTPS on "to pay

basis" till 31.12.1996. The outstanding, amounts payable by BTPS to Coal Companies and Railways as on 30.11.1996, are Rs. 120.94 crores and Rs. 727.39 crores, respectively.

(b) As per decision of the Government, Government of Delhk DESU is to increase its monthly payments to Badarpur Thermal Power Station by Rs. S crores per month from October, 1996 against current dues and to pay in full to BTPS all the current dues for purchase of power w.e.f. 1.1.1997 so as to enable BTPS to make payment for coal supplies and advance payment of freight to the Railways for transportation of coal.

Diesel Outlets for Farmers' Cooperatives, etc.

2180. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to sanction diesel outlets to farmers' cooperatives, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Bodies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the reasons for not broad-basing the marketing strategy of oil companies;

(d) whether it is a fact that very few outlets for marketing are being released every year; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to expand the marketing outlets for diesel and petrol?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) As per existing policy, 55% of dealerships/ distributorships of petroleum products are earmarked for open category Consumers Cooperative Societies are eligible to apply for such dealerships. They are given preference over other candidates under this category. There is no proposal at present to sanction diesel outlets exclusively for Farmers Cooperatives, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Bodies.

(c) and (e) Oil Marketing Companies decide their marketing strategy keeping in view the consumption in an area, their commercial interest and customers' requirements. Locations for new retial outlets are identified on the basis of the market survey keeping in view the volume-distance norms. These are included in the Marketing Plans and dealers are selected in accordance with the prescribed guidelines. This is a continuous process.

(d) No, Sir.

LPG Connection at Basot

2181. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of the original registrants for LPG connections at Basot, Distt. Almora, U.P. remain yet to be allotted LPG connections;

(b) whether any efforts have been made to enlarge the number of beneficiaries receiving LPG from this point;

(c) whether DBC facility has been provided to the registrants at this point; and

(d) if not, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir. The Oil Companies have only a waiting list of 106 with the distributor at Basot, District Almora, U.P.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir, however, due to limited product availability during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 1996-97, new connections could not be released across the counter.

Presently, 15 customers have been provided with DBC facility, which is available for other customers also.

(d) Does not apply in view of "C